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EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

March 14, 2002

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Mr. William F. Caton  
Acting Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
The Portals  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

RECEIVED

MAR 14 2002

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Re: **Notification of Ex Parte Communication**  
**MM Docket Nos. 01-235 and 96-197**

Dear Mr. Caton:

This is to advise you, in accordance with Section 1.1206 of the FCC's rules, that on Tuesday, March 12, 2002, John Cottingham, general manager of Media General, Inc.'s WSPA-TV in Spartanburg, South Carolina met with Commissioner Michael J. Copps. The majority of the visit was dedicated to a tour of the station's facilities, specifically its technical and news operations.

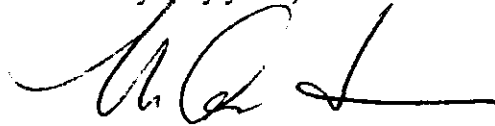
Mr. Cottingham also discussed with Commissioner Copps the Comments and Reply Comments that Media General submitted on December 3, 2001, and February 15, 2002, respectively, in the above-referenced dockets. The discussion involved various issues raised in Media General's Comments and Reply Comments, including Media General's concern over recent increases in the cost of presenting local newscasts; the company's view that repeal of the newspaper/broadcast cross-ownership rule will enhance the delivery of local news and information; the increase in the number of media outlets and the growth of new media sources, such as the Internet, since the rule was adopted; the declining audience shares garnered by local television newscasts in the Greenville-Spartanburg, SC-Asheville, N.C.-Anderson, SC DMA and across the nation; declining levels of newspaper circulation; the view that the benefits of media convergence can only be effectively achieved through common ownership; the experiences of journalists working in several media at the same time; and the benefits for newsgathering, such as combined archives, that accrue from common ownership.

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Mr. William F. Caton  
March 14, 2002  
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The attached material was provided during the course of the meeting. As required by section 1.1206(b), two copies of this letter are being submitted for each of the above-referenced dockets.

Very truly yours,

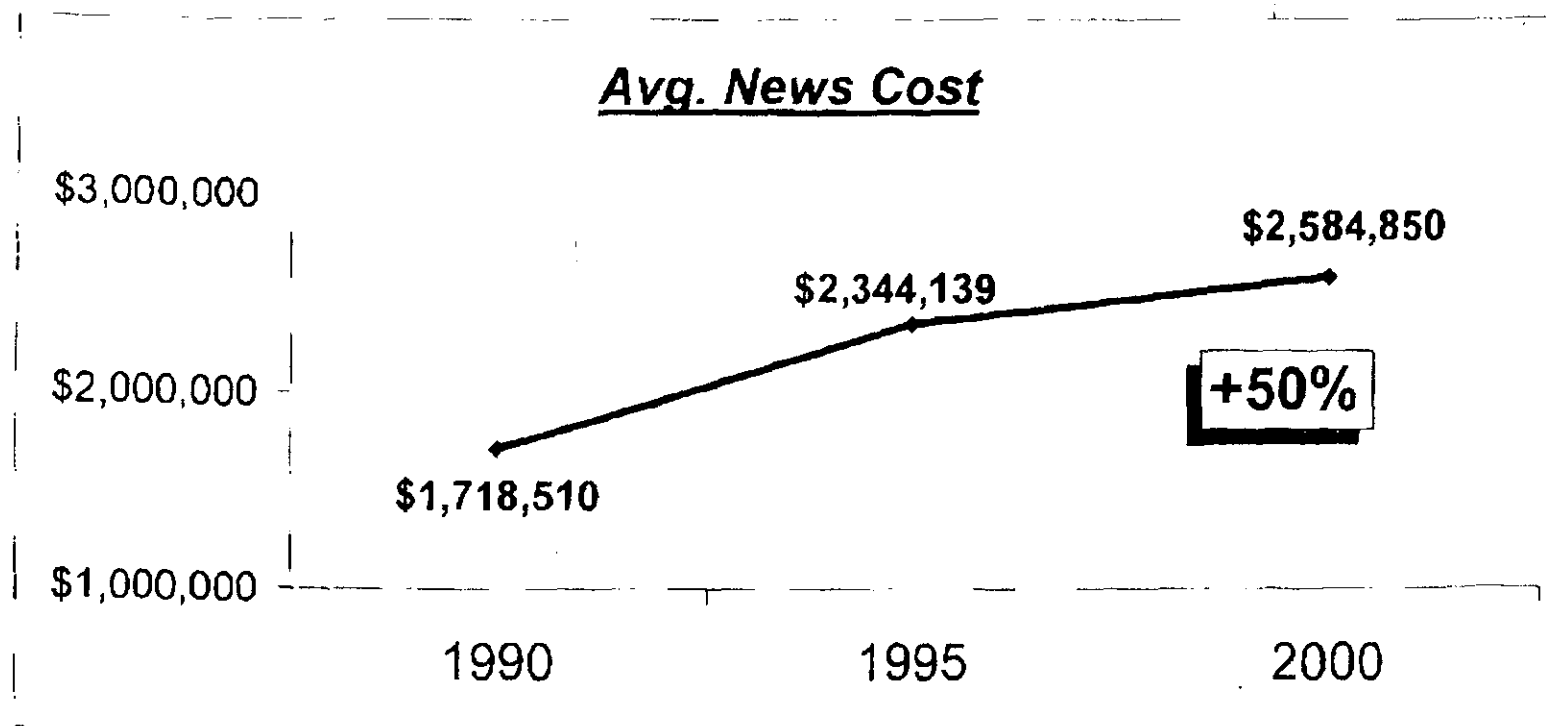
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Anne Swanson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

M. Anne Swanson

Enclosures  
cc w/encls. by hand delivery:  
The Honorable Michael J. Copps

# Information Packet

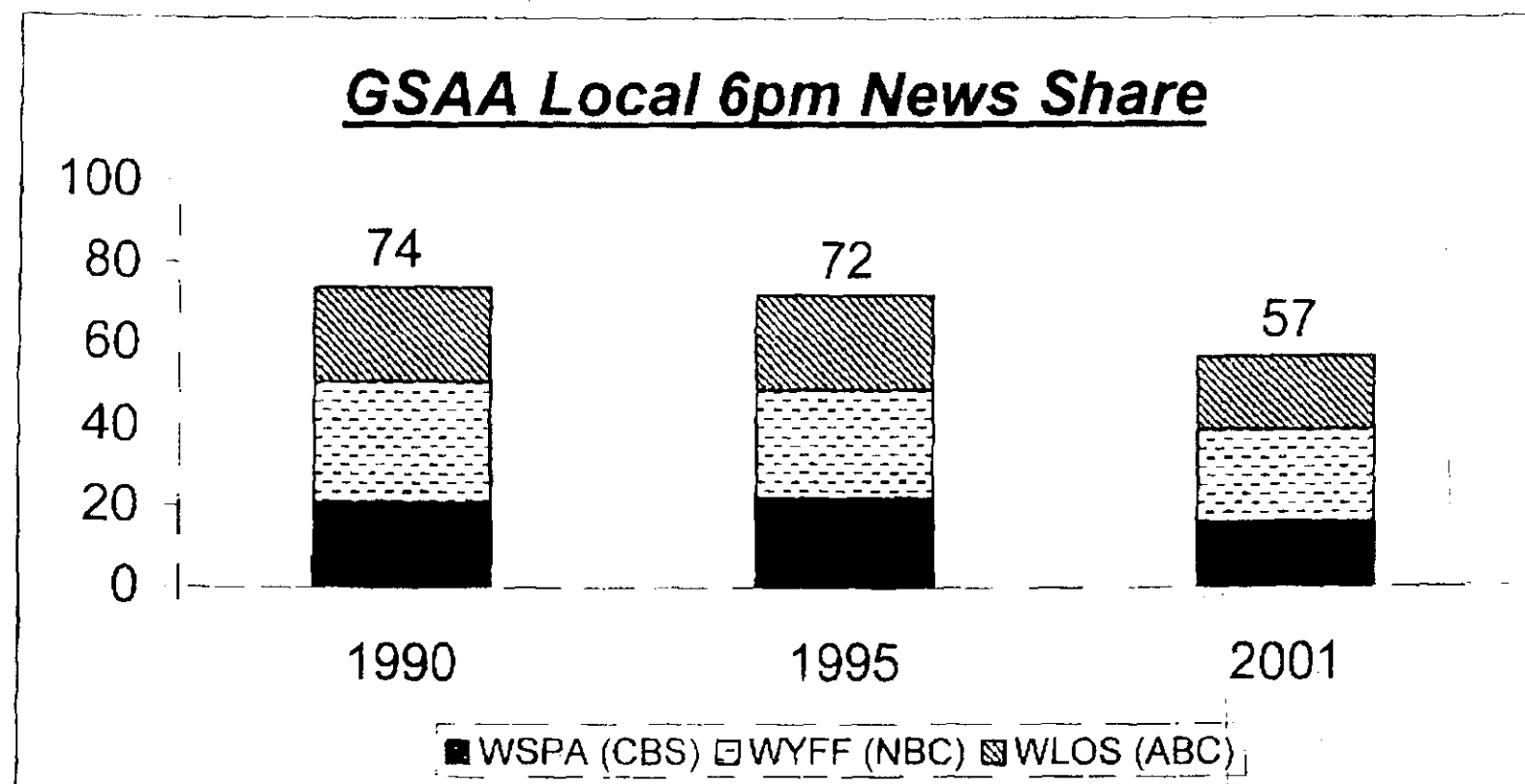


**Expense by Dept.**

(Markets 31-40)	1990	1995	2000
Avg. News Cost	\$1,718,510	\$2,344,139	\$2,584,850
Percent of Total Expenses	16.9%	20.5%	22.1%

Source: NAB "Television Financial Report"





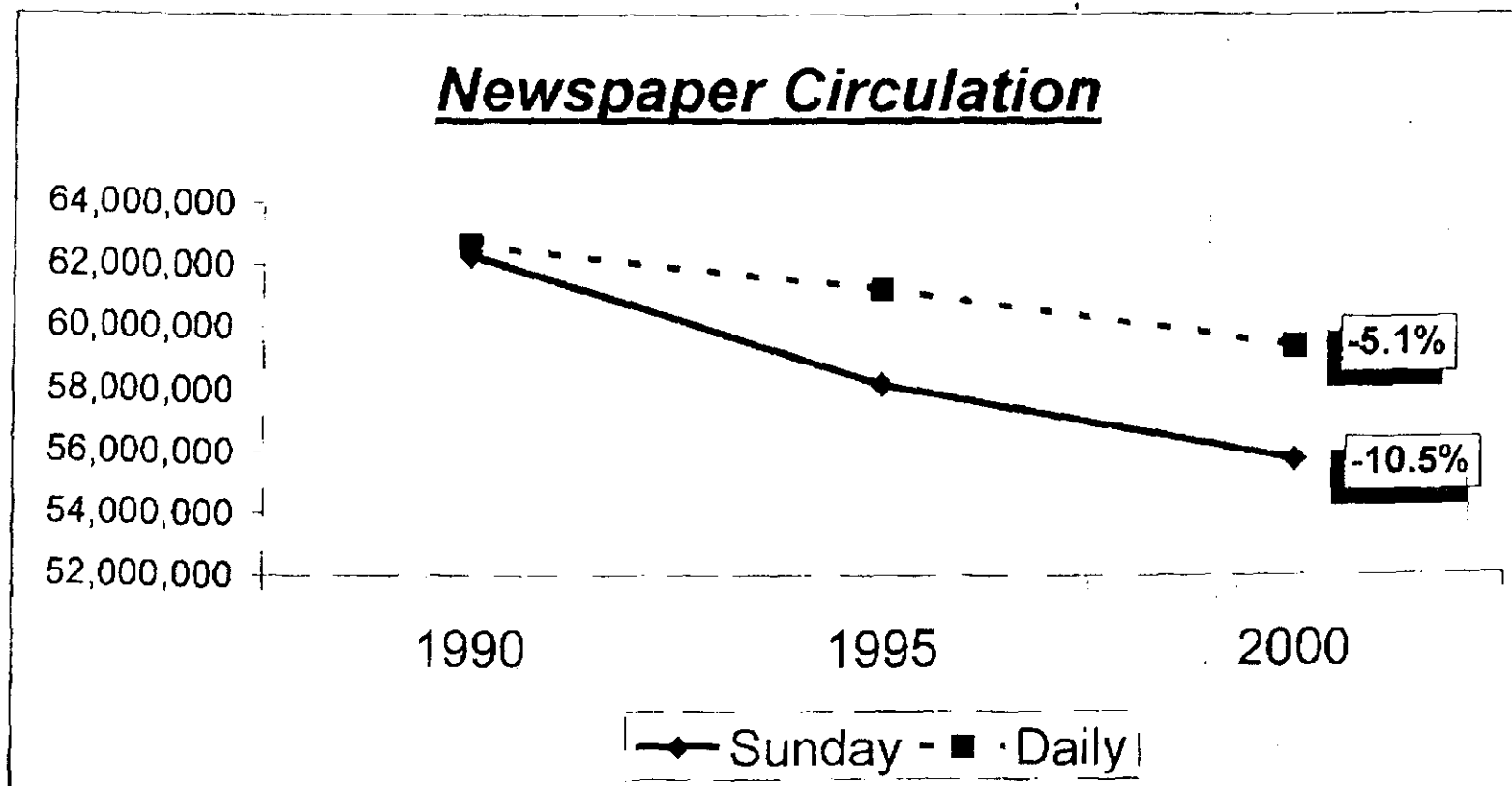
**Conclusion:** Local 6pm news shares have declined over the past 11 years from 74 to 57 percent, or a 23% decrease.

6pm Local News Share (WYFF, WSPA, WLOS)			
	1990	1995	2001
WSPA (CBS)	21	22	16
WYFF (NBC)	30	27	23
WLOS (ABC)	23	23	18
<b>Total Local News Share</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>57</b>

WSPA added the 5p News in Nov96  
WSPA added the 5:30p News in Feb99

Source: Nielsen





**Conclusion:** Newspaper circulation, both Daily and Sunday, have been in decline over the past decade.

Newspaper Circulation	Daily		Sunday	
	Circulation	% Change	Circulation	% Change
1990	62,328,000		62,635,000	
1995	58,193,000	-6.6%	61,229,000	-2.2%
2000	55,773,000	-4.2%	59,421,000	-3.0%
	<b>Total Chan</b>	<b>-10.5%</b>		<b>-5.1%</b>

Source: Newspaper Assoc. of America(6/01) based on Nielsen and Editor & Publisher



Number of Commercial Television Stations	
Year	Stations
1990	1,092
1995	1,161
2001	1,290

Increase 18.1%

Source: TVB

Cable TV Households	
Year	Percent
1990	56.4%
1995	63.4%
2001	68.0%

Increase 20.6%

Source: TVB

Internet Growth (Hosts)	
Year	Hosts
1990	313,000
1995	4,852,000
2001	93,047,785

Increase 297.0%

Source: Hobbes' Internet Timeline

Time Spent with Media	
Medium	Minutes
Television	253
Newspaper	45
Internet	30

Source: Eruskin Audits and Surveys Worldwide, 2000

## HERE COME THE SUPER JOURNALISTS

Learn New Skills or Face Some Downsizing of Your Own

By CORY BERGMAN

A WFLA-TV REPORTER is trying to keep her deadlines straight. Working a big out-of-town court case, her live shots are the least of her worries. Besides the 5pm newscast, she has to file a story for the Tampa Tribune and finish up a reporter's notebook for WFLA's website, TBO.com. A futuristic scenario? Hardly. Jackie Barron was the reporter, and it happened a year ago.

Tomorrow's most successful journalists will report seamlessly across TV, radio, newspapers and the web. Call the new breed, "super journalists": smart, hard-working communicators pushed to the limit to make the most of a story. Super journalists have broad skill sets. They're technically savvy, a whiz on the web and can write proficiently for a variety of mediums. They're flexible, quick-thinking adrenaline junkies who know the urgency of digital news in the new economy. Take today's typical 14-year-old. She watches TV, surfs the web, zaps instant messages and talks on the phone at the same time. Now just reverse the process.

But we have a long ways to go. Journalists are incredibly hardheaded. Many newspaper journalists live on one deadline a day. They're convinced television is sloppy and sensational. Meanwhile, proud TV journalists belittle everyone else. "We do TELEVISION," you can hear them say, "It's the only news medium that REALLY matters."

"The platform of delivery is probably the least important part of what we do as journalists, and yet it is the one thing that too many veterans want to hold onto," said Dan Bradley, VP of News for the Media General Broadcast Group, which includes WFLA-TV. "Deep down, most journalists want their stories to be read by as many people as possible. With that in mind, then we should all be embracing convergence."

Yet the nuts and bolts are getting in the way. While some journalists may recognize the value of broader exposure, they're already swamped with work. Facing longer hours and a litany of deadlines, convergence is becoming a bad word. "Most media companies have set up [journalists] with very tight reporting, editing and production schedules," said Mark Thalheimer, Future of News Project Director for RTNDF. "From a few research projects we've done, both print and broadcast reporters seem interested in increasing their skills sets, but it takes time, training and a significant commitment from management." "We need to reexamine our priorities, and make sure our journalists are using their time effectively," said Bradley. "I think it is important that salaries are established that recognizes the additional skills and work involved in creating relevant content for multiple platforms. This is not going to happen overnight, but must happen if we want our newsrooms to be competitive."

But the smartest journalists will make the first move. Fighting the inevitable is foolish. Ownership caps are loosening, and consolidation is kicking into high gear. Competent journalists who take the torch of convergence will win the hearts of the top brass. Think of it as a wide-open opportunity.

Take NBC, for example. Five years ago, it was blasphemy to suggest a single NBC correspondent would rattle off live shots for MSNBC while working on a spot for Nightly News. Fueled by strong management commitment, NBC staffers soon realized the extra effort paid off. The most productive producers and correspondents began winning the biggest stories. The same goes for tomorrow's converged newsroom. Assignment editors who write for the web will climb the news ladder faster than those who ignore it. TV photographers who snap digital photos will end up landing the best assignments. Anchors with strong writing skills will win the opportunity to write a newspaper column. Writers who edit on a desktop will catch the eye of top management. "I believe as we go down the road a piece on this adventure, we will come to the realization that we are going to have to restructure our newsrooms, both broadcast and print," said Bradley. "Some of the best learning experiences have come from things being tried that in the past just would never have been tried."

New experiences demand an open mind and better training. While most white collar employees in today's economy have scrambled to learn new skills and take on a fresh approach, most journalists desperately -- foolishly -- hold on to the past. But a new economic reality has arrived. Consolidation is here to stay. Newsrooms that ignore convergence will soon find it difficult to defend a big coverage staff. Airing a story once doesn't justify its cost anymore. It's time to reinvent ourselves or confront some downsizing of our own. "If there is one single piece of advice I would offer to a newsroom that is faced with developing a relationship with a new platform, it would be don't be afraid to fail," said Bradley. "Fear of failure keeps the creativity needed to be successful bottled up." And don't forget, the super journalists are coming. They'll cover the biggest stories, win the largest audiences and earn the most money at twice the speed. Are you ready for them?





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**A Media General Station**



Founding Directorate



## The Future of News is Here

The media world is changing and that explains why the world's media need a Newsplex. Located in the capital city of Columbia, South Carolina, USA, Newsplex is a prototype, micro-newsroom that will help journalists find better ways to gather and disseminate information.

Newsplex is the result of a unique partnership between Ifra, the world's leading association for media publishing based in Darmstadt, Germany, and the University of South Carolina, the state's 200-year-old flagship institution.

Newsplex will train Ifra members and other media professionals as well as students from the University's College of Journalism and Mass Communications. Through its Affiliate program, the knowledge acquired in cross-media newsgathering will be shared worldwide with universities and professional organizations.

A Directorate of some of the world's leading news and technology companies will guide its work. No one can predict the future of news technology, but one thing is certain, it can be found in the Newsplex at the University of South Carolina.

Affiliates

Where the Futures of Journalism  
and News Technology Intersect

